

A magical night at Acadia's International Student Banquet

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It's a long-standing tradition at Acadia University – the International Student Banquet – a magical night of cultural sharing with entertainment and fine dining.

The 2016 banquet was held in the Sheldon L. Fountain Commons where 160 guests were treated to performances by more than 50 students representing countries from around the world. They performed music, dance, spoken word, and cultural presentations, and shared traditions from their homelands with the audience.

“The enthusiasm for this intercultural evening continues to grow with each passing year;” says Julie Snair, coordinator of International Education. “This is an important link between the University and the surrounding community.”

Acadia International Student Banquet Photo Gallery:



The evening began with a beautiful dragon dance by the Chinese student association and ended several hours later with most people up on the floor dancing with the Bollywood dance group. There was also a colourful and energetic fashion show, songs, poems, informative presentations, and the international buffet, featuring dishes such as pumpkin hummus, Korean style cabbage, Caribbean barbecue, chicken, black bean cakes, tzatziki, curry sauce, mushroom rice, lemon mousse, jasmine green tea, and more.

The Wong International Centre held a photo contest in the weeks leading up to the event and many fantastic photos from students and community members were displayed as well. A local henna artist was also on hand before the event for those wishing to add a bit of global fashion to the evening.

“The students not only introduce the community to the culture of their homelands, but it also provides an opportunity for group participation through questions and games with prizes,” she explains. “For many community members this is the first opportunity they have to interact with international students and learn about their backgrounds. The event focuses on the benefits of having a multicultural community in a rural area.”

Snair adds, some students, who may not even be aware of the meaning behind their cultural traditions, do research for this event and often gain an increased sense of pride and understanding of who they are and where they have come from. The community members are also able to reflect on their own heritage.

“Performing and speaking about their cultural background connects the students to the broader community and allows them to feel a sense of membership. They receive overwhelming praise for their part in the performance and have the opportunity, sometimes for the first time, to interact and converse with

members of the local community,” she says.

The international students are also potential new Canadians as they are eligible through the post-graduation work permit program through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to stay and work in Canada for three years after they complete their degree.

“Many of them will decide to make Canada their home and therefore it is very important that they discover a sense of pride in their heritage, a sense of membership and belonging in a Canadian community, and an appreciation of the value of what they can offer to Canadian culture,” says Snair.

Learn more about [International Education](#) at Acadia.

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